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Does Public Housing Cause Poverty and Isolation: An Examination of the Effects of Public Housing on Causing Poverty and Flight of the Middle Class

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Oral Presentation 2.4

**DOES PUBLIC HOUSING CAUSE POVERTY AND ISOLATION: AN
EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECTS OF PUBLIC HOUSING ON CAUSING
POVERTY AND FLIGHT OF THE MIDDLE CLASS**

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Where to place public housing has been a perplexing and uncomfortable issue for many years. Even though politicians and realtors thought that it was better to place public housing in areas in which it was needed, the result of that decision has caused more problems than solutions. Chicago, Illinois provides a prime example. As in most major cities, Chicago's public housing was placed in areas with dwindling job opportunities and overcrowding. This, in turn, has caused the areas large numbers of public housing units to become "breeding grounds" for poverty. Also, due to the migration of jobs and the increased populations brought by housing projects, middle class residents moved out of the areas in search of jobs and more space, taking businesses and other resources with them. These areas are then left with a concentration of poor who cannot support themselves socially or economically due to lack of resources.

Using U.S. Census data from 1950-1990 for six Chicago neighborhoods, the author will give an overview of social and economic characteristics in each area before, during, and after the completion of public housing. By examining changes in racial composition, population, class, and income in these areas, the effects of public housing on resident, and neighborhood status will be analyzed. In addition, these factors will be used to examine why the middle class migrate from areas that contain large amounts of public housing.